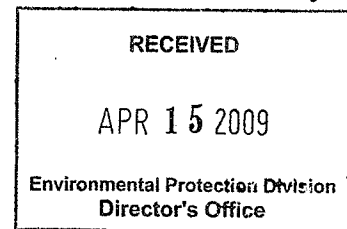


April 14, 2009

To: Dr. Carol Couch, Director, Environmental Protection Division
Fm: Paula and John Swint
Warthen, Georgia 31094
Re: Proposed Coal-burning Plant: Plant Washington



It is with great concern that I write you again. My first letter to you was September 12, 2008. I appreciate the response from your office explaining the permitting process. Since then, I have been patiently waiting on "my turn" to ask questions at the public meeting.

The EPD question and answer session was held in Sandersville on March 5, 2009. Over 300 people packed the auditorium; there was standing room only and some in the lobby. Many questions were asked, but many more people had questions they did not get to ask due to time. Not all questions were answered in ways that gave me confidence in the permitting process for this specific plant. After that meeting, I emailed Mr. Jim Ussery, who was the moderator and was given as the contact person. I also sent him a letter stating my questions and concerns. Our home is just a few miles from the plant site. We are very concerned about our family's health, our food crops, water, and native woodlands. The air quality in Washington County is already near non-attainment. We have recently heard of cities across Georgia with the same concerns.

During the slide presentation Mr. Cap made several statements about the improvement in the air quality in Georgia as existing coal-burning plants were meeting stricter requirements. That made me proud of the work the EPD is doing. It bothered me the way that Plant Washington's proposed emissions were compared to existing plants...with slides showing these emissions would be less. In my opinion, the EPD should not imply that this new plant is so "small" that its emissions won't be "that bad" when compared to the "big" plants. Implications such as these should not come from EPD data. They sounded like Power4Georgians statements and with Mr. Alford seated on stage, this added to the illusion that EPD already supports the Power4Georgians proposal. On that same chart, Plant Branch 2015 emissions shows 44 for mercury while Plant Washington still shows 122 pounds per year. This should be unacceptable when comparing the size of the plants. The smaller plant should not be allowed to pollute more than the larger one. Please take a personal interest in reviewing all the data on this proposed plant. Zero tolerance should be the stance of the EPD right now; not permitting based on "cumulative" totals of all emissions in Georgia.

An article in the Augusta Chronicle on April 3 quoted Mr. Cap as saying, "We do not think that the plant will have a negative effect on monitors in Augusta. Their emissions are too low, and they are too far away." The same message was broadcast on GPB that week. In my opinion, these are irresponsible statements and extremely inappropriate coming from the person entrusted to protect the air quality and public health for the citizens of Georgia.

Your department has an overwhelming responsibility to protect our precious natural resources. You have experts who do take seriously this daunting task. Please help the people in every department under your supervision to realize that the citizens of Georgia do trust them to do what is best for us. Locally, the promise of a few jobs is overshadowing the chances our leaders are taking by building the facility here. The pollution from this facility will be concentrated in the areas closer to the plant, that is my personal concern. I also know that it will contribute to air quality problems in the rest of Georgia, the Southeast, the US and the world. People here seem to think that if your office gets more letters in favor of the plant than opposed to it, that will help in your decision making. Many of our county leaders are in favor of the plant because of potential economic and political reasons.

Please continue the careful examination of this application. Thank you for your time and attention to this very serious matter. Thank you, also, for the efforts of your department in protecting the environment and natural resources in Georgia.

Sincerely,



Paula and John Swint

2570 Centralia Rachels Road

Warthen, Georgia 31094

Copies of

Mar. 5 - Questions to Mr. Ussery

Mar. 6 - email - askept

March 5, 2009

My question is directed to our representatives at the Environmental Protection Division of the Department of Natural Resources who have the responsibility to help me protect my air, land and water: my environment, my farm, my well water, and my family. I live in Northern Washington County less than 10 miles from the proposed plant site.

My question is simple: If not you, then who? If this agency can not stop this potential source of pollution, then who can...who will...who should I ask?

You must not allow this source of pollution to be built. It is a direct threat to my home, my family, my property, my food sources, and my way of life.

I have already expressed my concerns to the Washington County Commissioners, Chamber of Commerce, and Economic Development Authority, the Washington EMC, to your department, to representatives in Atlanta and Washington. So far, none has given me any assurance that they can stop this proposed plant.

Some have said "fear tactics" are being used in our community. Please listen to me...I do have fears about this plant. I live close enough for it to destroy what my husband and I have worked to protect for 30 years and what his father and grandfather cared for and protected for nearly 100 years. This plant is a direct threat to my family...and to my neighbors. We will receive 100% of the pollution. I am asking for the truth to be told about what this plant will do to those of us this close to it. I am asking for answers specific to my family, home and property – not generalizations and speculations. I really don't think our county leaders would be pushing it so much if they actually lived this close, but I don't see how they can take comfort in the fact that they will be 15-20 miles away. A map on the plant's website shows their projection of where the most concentrated pollution will fall in a 10,20,30 kilometer radius from the plant.

My husband and I depend on a well for fresh water. Last September we woke up one morning and had no water. The level had dropped too low. This is the second time in the last few years the water level in this well dropped due to the drought that all of Georgia is experiencing. The first time this happened, we had to have another well drilled. This involved a newer, deeper well, a new pump, and new pipes to the house. After all this time and expense, the new well contains water that smells very bad, even when filtered. We have to use it for showering and laundry, but everything has a lingering odor. When we have to use this well, I buy water to use for drinking and cooking.

My point: In drought-stricken Georgia, you can not grant water permits for Plant Washington to use millions of gallons per day.

My question: Can you assure me that my water sources won't be effected by Plant Washington? If not you, then who should I ask?

We depend on our farm for food crops, fruit and vegetables. We have worked hard over the years to provide fresh foods for our family. We have food crops from April to October. I am concerned that my strawberries, peaches, blueberries, apples, pears, grapes, scuppernongs, muscadines, spinach, lettuce, broccoli, tomatoes, squash and green beans could all be harmed from the "daily fallout" from Plant Washington. These crops all have thin skins or edible surface areas which would have continuous exposure to substances that I don't want on my food. It won't be a matter of simply washing them off and eating them. The daily exposure and potential absorption is not a risk I care to take

Mr. Asbery, Thank you for coming to the Question and Answer session - I never got to ask my questions - so I'm sending you my questions concerning

Plant Washington

I am glad we had so many people. I'm sorry everyone.

did not get to ask for more details.

*Sincerely,
Paula Swint*

with my food. These fresh foods have been a source of pride and a symbol of good health as we share them with our family and friends each year.

My point: Yes, I do fear that my fresh fruit and vegetables won't be healthy or safe for eating after being exposed 24 hours a day to the "plant fallout".

My question: Can the EPD assure me that my food crops will be safe enough to eat? If not you, then who should I ask?

Right now my family is healthy. A few years ago, my husband had a serious form of pneumonia which rapidly advanced restricting his entire respiratory system in a few hours. After several months of treatment, he recovered; but we now better understand how quickly and severely the lack of oxygen can effect a person's health. Several families in my community have individuals with moderate to severe asthma - these are both children and adults.

My point: The air quality within 10 miles of Plant Washington will be the most concentrated with toxins.

My question: Can the EPD assure me that my family and neighbors won't have MORE potential breathing problems because of this air quality? If not you, then who should I ask?

I know that pollution from this plant will harm, not just my family and neighbors, but also people, air and water resources across Georgia, the Southeast, the USA, and the world, but when I make a statement like this, I am accused of using fear. When I state my family's position and proximity to the plant, that is a fact and the fear is real. I continue to seek the truth in this matter. All our local citizens are being told is that the plant is safe and will give the county jobs. There are many other questions to be asked and for which we need truthful answers. I ask that this agency consider the impact this plant will have on the lives of those living directly under it's pollution. I am requesting that you use your best judgment in considering the human side of this important decision. This is a moral issue with dangerous consequences.

My point: This is a serious matter. It is your responsibility to protect the citizens of Georgia, our environment and natural resources. Even if the application for this plant is absolutely perfect in its final form, it is your job to protect "us" from "them".

My question: If not you, then who should I ask?

Paula and John Swint
2570 Centralia Rachels Road
Warthen, Georgia 31094
478-552-0448

From: Swint <swintt@washemc.net>
Subject: Plant Washington
Date: March 6, 2009 9:35:45 AM EST
To: askepd@gaepd.org

I have expressed my concerns to the Washington County Commissioners, Chamber of Commerce, and Economic Development Authority, the Washington EMC, to your department, to representatives in Atlanta and Washington. So far, none has given me any assurance that they can stop this proposed plant. I live close enough for this plant to destroy what my husband and I have worked to protect for 30 years and what his father and grandfather cared for and protected for nearly 100 years. This plant is a direct threat to my family and to my neighbors. We will receive 100% of the pollution. I am asking for truthful answers specific to my family, home and property - not generalizations and speculations. Water: Last September our well went dry for the second time in the last few years. The first time we had to have a new, deeper well dug. This water smells bad even when filtered. When I have to use it for laundry and showers, there is a lingering odor. I buy water for cooking and drinking. In drought stricken Georgia, if you grant the permit for the plant to use millions of gallons of water per day, can you assure me that my water sources won't be effected? Air/land: We depend on our farm for food crops, fruit and vegetables. I am concerned that daily exposure and potential absorption from the "daily fallout" from Plant Washington will make my food less healthy. Can the EPD assure me that my food crops will be safe enough to eat? Air: Several families in my community have individuals with severe asthma. Can the EPD assure me that my family and neighbors won't have MORE potential breathing problems because of the air quality? This is of special concern because the quality of air in Washington County is already at critical levels.

The pollution from this plant will harm, not just my family and neighbors, but also people, air, and water resources across Georgia, the Southeast, the USA, and the world. My family is close enough to the plant that my fears and concerns are very real. I depend on your agency to consider the impact this plant will have on the lives of those living directly under its pollution. I am requesting that you use your best judgement in considering the human side of this important decision. This is a moral issue with dangerous consequences. Even if the application for this plant is absolutely perfect in its final form, it is your job to protect the citizens of Georgia, our air, land, water and natural resources.

Thank you for your attention to this serious matter, Paula Swint, Warthen, Georgia